State of Mysore, and Government have therefore decided to try a similar experiment in this country. The statistical information already collected in my office is being published in a compendious volume and arrangements have been made for the regular collection and publication of agricultural and other statistics.

CIVIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

29. **Municipal Councils.**—The year 1095 is marked by the passing of two important legislative measures, *viz.*, the Municipal Regulation and the Legislative Council Regulation, and I may be permitted to make the observation that, in spite of their defects, they cannot but be considered as landmarks in the history of civic and political legislation in this country. It is impossible to deny that the former of these enactments has enhanced the usefulness of municipal bodies, enlarged their powers and resources, and provided facilities for their constitution on a distinctly popular and representative basis. Government have not been slow to follow up this Regulation by taking steps to give practical effect to its liberal features. Soon after I assumed charge of my office, a conference of the Presidents of Municipal Councils was held under my presidency, and the conference was invited to lay down general lines of policy to be adopted in regard to the constitution and working of the Councils, and the manner in which they should amplify their resources and assume greater responsibilities. While the duty of the Councils to enhance their resources by resort more largely to local taxation and depend in a gradually diminishing measure on the doles of Government was emphasised, it was fully recognised that these popular institutions should be freed from official trammels in a constantly increasing measure. Government then announced their intention of generally accepting the decisions of the conference, and I think that I may fairly claim for the Government that they have kept their promise in the orders they have since issued regarding the constitution of the several Councils. It will be noticed that they have been systematically sanctioning the inclusion of the largest possible elective element in the constitution of the Councils, and have also been allowing almost every Council to elect its own President. In a few cases, they have not hesitated to go even beyond the recommendations of the Councils and to grant them constitutions more liberal than those proposed by themselves. It is needless to add that nothing will be more pleasing to the Government than the transference of the entire burden of Municipal administration to the new Councils, retaining only the power to conduct a strict audit or scrutiny into their affairs periodically, and it is hoped that the people living within municipal limits will realise to the full their responsibility to pay for services direct and indirect which they get through the labours of their civic fathers. From numerous protests and petitions with which they have been for some time flooded, Government gather with regret that the unwillingness of the people to share the financial burden has not diminished in proportion to the growth of their desire to share in the work of administration.

30. **Local Boards.**—It is under contemplation to widen the sphere of local self-government, by extending it to rural areas, and with this object the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil is engaged in drafting a Local Boards Bill. It is the intention of Government to create two sets of local bodies. One will be the Village Administrative Panchayat with specific sources of income and definite powers and responsibilities, such as the maintenance and control of local roads and ferries and the supervision of primary education and local sanitation. The other will be the District Council, representative in its constitution and mainly advisory in regard to its functions. It will be the recognised body for dealing with local needs and for advising District Officers in regard to agricultural, industrial, co-operative and other matters connected with the well-being of the locality served by it.

31. **Legislative Council.**—The Government have already indicated their intention of further liberalising the provisions of the Legislative Council Regulation, I of 1095, by making provision for a non-official majority, and by conferring the privileges of moving resolutions and asking supplementary questions. Government have also resolved to afford to the non-official members of the Council an opportunity to participate in the framing of the annual budget, and the latter have

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already chosen six representatives from among themselves to sit with the officers of the Government in committee for discussing and settling the draft budget for the year 1097.

32. Popular Assembly.—It was my privilege to inform the Legislative Council on the first occasion that the question was raised after I took charge that it was the intention of the Government to revise the rules relating to the Assembly. This revision will, I assure you, be undertaken as early as practicable. It will thus be seen that it has ever been the earnest aim of His Highness the Maha Raja, whose accession to the *masnad* synchronised with the origin of popular government in this country, to train his subjects in the arts of civics and politics and to enable them to exert a continually growing influence over the administration of the State.

33. Social Progress.—It is a source of sincere gratification to me to note that the different classes and communities inhabiting this State are fully alive to the importance of remedying their social defects and effecting such improvements in their customary laws as are conducive to their social well-being. Government have always given practical proof of their readiness to help the people in their efforts at self-amelioration. In conformity with the avowed policy of the Government in this respect, leave has been granted for the introduction of a private Bill in the Legislative Council to effect further improvements in the law regulating marriage and inheritance among Nayars, while another Bill calculated to remove similar disabilities among Ezhavas, introduced in the Council as a governmental measure, has been referred to a Select Committee. Government have also appointed a Committee to examine the customary law relating to marriage and inheritance among Nanjanad Vellalas, and suggest the necessary improvements in the form of a draft Bill.

34. Other Measures.—The Additional Head Sirkar Vakil will soon introduce a Bill to amend the Jenmi and Kudiyan Regulation. With the object of giving the educated public a share in the administration of criminal justice, as has already been done in the case of civil justice, a Bill has recently been introduced in the Council to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, for taking power to establish benches of Magistrates for the summary trial of minor offences. It is hoped that these benches will afford substantial relief to the stipendiary Magistrates and enable the Government to reduce their number. In the same spirit, the pecuniary and territorial jurisdiction of some of the civil benches, commonly known as the Village Panchayat Courts, has been recently enhanced, and Government hope to establish more civil benches as time goes on.

35. The Depressed Classes.—While speaking at such length on the duties of Government and the privileges of the people, it is only fitting that I should strike a note of advice in regard to the responsibilities of the more fortunate classes of the people of the State towards their less favoured brethren known by the common name of 'the Depressed Classes.' The gradual amelioration of the lot of these classes has been a prominent plank on the platform of all progressive Governments, and Travancore has never been an exception to this rule. To the several invaluable concessions, educational and otherwise, that have been made by Government in the past in favour of these unfortunate communities, it has been my privilege to add a few more, in regard to the assignment of land, the construction of roads, and the sinking of fresh-water wells, while you will note that it is mainly in view to the protection of these communities that the Land Assignment Bill has been brought forward in the Legislative Council. It behoves every one in the State, high and low, to remember that these backward communities form a great national asset, as on them depends to a very large extent the production of food-grains and other articles that constitute the wealth of the country, and it is my most solemn appeal to all to omit no means in their power to improve the lot of these communities. May I, in the same strain of friendly frankness, advise all those who labour under civic disabilities and differences, not to be swayed by hatred or passion towards those who do not suffer from similar disabilities, but to view the situation in a spirit of calmness and confidence, remembering that many of the social differences that we see around us have

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the sanction of long usage behind them and that nothing would be more unreasonable than to expect them to disappear in the twinkling of an eye, and remembering also that such disabilities are bound to disappear with the spread of education and with the change in national ideals and outlook? It is as great a folly to think of forcing the pace of social progress, as it is to think of offering resistance to its measured march. While every effort in the direction of social amelioration will receive the sympathetic support of Government, so long as it is carried on in a calm and healthy spirit, every one will do well to remember that any attempt bordering on intimidation, violence or transgression of law, must recoil with crushing effect on the wrong-doer. Government can only stand for reasonable progress and they cannot too strongly condemn every movement that is calculated to intensify class hatred and bitterness and encourage lawlessness.

FINANCE.

36. In the earlier parts of my address, I emphasised the need for reform and improvement in a variety of directions. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that most of these reforms and improvements mean additional expenditure, and that no headway worth the name can be made by the Government without a substantial increase in their financial resources. The problem of finance has therefore to be faced, and in doing so it is well to remember that it would be advisable, if possible, not to go in for any fresh impost on land. We have to look to other sources to enhance our income and meet our growing expenditure. There is a wide-spread feeling that the professional and trading classes are not shouldering their due share of the fiscal burden, and knowing as the Government do that this feeling is well-grounded, the first source to which they propose to turn for additional revenue is the income tax. This tax has the merit of yielding a progressively growing income to the State as trade and business activities increase in the country. But an income tax, by itself, is not likely to give the full measure of relief needed to remove the strain on our finance. On a rough calculation made on the basis of the rates which prevailed in British India under the old Income Tax Act, it is found that this tax is not likely to add more than Rs. 3 lakhs to the coffers of the State, and it will be necessary to tap other sources of income, if the general revenues of the State do not exhibit adequate elasticity. The problem is an exceedingly difficult and complicate one and can only be tackled with the help of expert advice. Government are considering the expediency of appointing a Committee of Ways and Means, presided over by a competent person, and it will give them the sincerest pleasure to associate a few non-officials with that Committee.

CONCLUSION.

37. The outlook of progressive peoples all over the world is rapidly changing. The strenuous times through which the world has recently passed have demonstrated the advantages of unity, and the beneficial effects of co-operation and combination. They have revealed new and unsuspected values in organisation, collective enterprise and governmental control of concerns of national importance. The aim of every civilised Government is the same, *viz.*, the promotion of the material comforts of the people and the acceleration of their moral, social and political progress. Every progressive nation is endeavouring to secure for itself better organisation, greater efficiency in administration, heartier co-operation between the Government and the people, improved methods of manufacture, cheaper supply of raw materials, and increased enterprise in trade. The developments I have projected in this address are in consonance with the trend of this new thought and their realisation depends largely on the willing and cheerful co-operation of the people with the Government. Ample opportunities for political and civic training have been afforded to the people by the privileges already conferred and will be afforded in even a greater measure by those yet to be conferred. It is for you, the enlightened subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja, to take full advantage of these opportunities, to make yourselves more and more responsible for the administration of local affairs, and to strengthen the hands of Government, whose interests, you may ever rest assured,

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are absolutely identical with those of the people committed to their care. I feel confident that I am not appealing in vain to your patriotism and public spirit when I ask you to co-operate with the Government in carrying out the beneficent intentions of His Gracious Highness the Maha Raja."

The Assembly adjourned at 1-10 P. M., to meet again the next day.

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